

Remarks

Claims 1-19 and 21-24 are pending. Claims 7, 9-19, and 21-24 are allowed. Accordingly, claims 1-6 and 8 are at issue herein.

Initially, the indication that claims 7, 9-19, and 21-24 are allowed, and that claims 3-5 recite allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation. Accordingly, claim 3 is rewritten in independent form to recite the limitations of its base claim 1 so that claim 3, and claims 4 and 5 which depend therefrom, should now be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 2 and 6 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(a)/(e) as anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2004/0045136 to Musil, et al. Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over Musil, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,116,835 to Blacket, et al.

The rejections, as they may apply to the claims presented herein, are respectfully traversed.

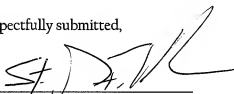
Claim 1 is directed to a rivet holder including a unitary plate body and a plurality of rivets. As amended, claim 1 calls for a plurality of apertures of the unitary plate body each having at least one retaining portion of the plate body configured to support and securely hold the rivets depending from the plate body. Amended claim 1 further recites the retaining portion being flexible so that deflection of the retaining portion allows the rivets supported thereby to be released from being held to the plate body by the flexible retaining portion. Musil, et al. do not disclose or suggest the recited retaining portion of amended claim 1.

More particularly, the rubber coated conveyor belt fasteners disclosed by Musil, et al. are far different from the recited rivet holder of amended claim 1. Whereas the strip of rubber coated fasteners of Musil, et al. is intended to be secured to the adjacent ends of a conveyor belt for forming a splice therebetween, the claimed rivet holder is used simply for loading rivets into guide blocks of applicator systems for conveyor belt fasteners. In other words, the rivet holder of claim 1 is never intended to be used on a conveyor belt in a splice therefor as are the rubber coated fasteners of Musil, et al. As such, Musil, et al. fail to disclose or suggest the recited apertures of a unitary plate body each having at least one retaining portion of the plate body configured to support and securely hold the rivets depending from the plate body, with the retaining portion being flexible so that deflection of the retaining portion allows the rivets supported thereby to be released from being held to the plate body by the flexible retaining portion. Musil, et al. do not disclose that the head 76 of the bolts 42 be held in the apertures 18a and 20a by a flexible retaining portion so that the bolts can be

released from the plate body with deflection of the flexible retaining portion, as required in amended claim 1. Instead, Musil, et al. teach that the bolt heads 76 stay in the apertures 18a and 20a as is required for connecting the lower plates 12a including the apertures 18a and 20a in which the bolt heads 76 seat to the conveyor belt. In this regard, Musil, et al. specifically disclose use of rubber material 68 which holds the bolt heads 76 in the apertures 18a and 20a in paragraph [0045]. Accordingly, it is believed that claim 1, and claims 2, 6 and 8 which depend therefrom, are allowable over the relied upon art.

Based on the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-6 and 8 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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